

ALMEYDA:

OR, THE

1572/725

RIVAL KINGS.

A

TRAGEDY.

By GORGES EDMOND HOWARD, Esq;

The Fourth EDITION, with several Alterations and
Additions.

*Semita certe
Tranquilla per virtutem patet unica vite.*

Juvenal, Sat. 10]

DUBLIN:

Printed by and for S. POWELL, in Dame-Street;
And for ELIZABETH LYNCH, in Skinner-Row.

M,DCC,LXXIV.

A. M. B. D. A.

RIVER

T. R. A. G. E. I. Y.

The Fourth Edition of the

Fourth Edition of the

D. U. B. I. N.

and to the



T H E

P R E F A C E.

ENCOURAGED not only by the Eulogiums with which I have been honoured in private letters from several persons, some of them the first in judgment and taste, and some of them unknown to me before ; but also, by those which the Reviewers and Magazines of three different nations *, have so generously bestowed on my Dramatic Essays, I have ventured to send forth this new edition of my *Almeyda*, or the *Rival Kings* ; in which, I have on the opinion
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and by the advice of several of my same literary acquaintance, both in England and Ireland, not only transposed the scenes in several parts of the former editions, but have removed others which were not only not approved of by them, as too much glancing at some of the recent matters of political contest, but (as I was informed) had prevented its exhibition, and have inserted others in their stead.

So that not only the *Machinery*, but also the fable and the *diction* have been abundantly altered in this new edition, and to my candid and judicious readers I shall now submit it, by whom, if it shall be approved, I shall be regardless of the malice of the envious, (a deal of which I have met with, as some of the public papers have shewn in their wretched Billingsgate productions) or the dislike and slight of the *titled* or the *wealthy illiterate*; the *vain* or *dissipated idler*, or *dull business-plodder*, and shall effectually comfort myself with the extatic joys of that imagination, which I have so had the honour to be allowed me; of which joys no mortal can deprive me: and of which also,
not

P R E F A C E.

not the mass of treasuries nor the power of greatness, no, not even of Monarchs can acquire or purchase the least portion. But my works must speak for themselves, not only now, but when I shall be rotten in my grave. Yet this I can with safety say, that by any of them, either in this way, or in that of the profession I am of, (at which, I notwithstanding these amusements drudged for thirty years and upwards) I never made as much, let their merit be what it may, as would pay for transcribing a single sheet for the press.—In short, both taste and authors have been reduced so low by the small encouragement, or rather discouragement they have these several years met with, that any of either worthy of notice, are scarcely to be heard of; so that, the benign influence of royalty can alone restore them, and draw forth latent genius into light.

As for my political productions, for which I have been as unjustly, as ungenerously treated: I shall only add to what I have said thereon in my preface to the last edition of my *Siege of Tamor*, that where attempts have been made to inflame the
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people against Government, by representations, false, as artful, and for private purposes only, (as have been too often the case) I have on some of these occasions, far as my abilities enabled me, endeavoured to undeceive the deluded, by my explanations of such matters as from my public employments, and course of reading therein, I might have better understood than many others, who were not so induced to enquire: and this without the least expectation of any reward: nor did I ever thereby gain a shilling; nor would I intentionally publish a line to the injury of my country, or its constitution, for all the wealth upon earth: and I can challenge the world to produce such a line. Yet, these my disinterested, well intended endeavours, have notwithstanding made all those my enemies, who neither seek for information, in these cases, nor wish such matters should be explained. But to conclude, my true political principles are fully breathed all through my two dramatic published essays, to which I refer.

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T O

TO THE
QUEEN.

MADAM,

PERMIT me to lay at your
MAJESTY'S feet, in testi-
mony of my unfeigned duty
and loyalty, the following little
Dramatic Essay : and if, in the
characters of Hamet and Al-
meyda, there be any resem-
blances of the great originals I
would essay to paint ; if any
sentiments, which can please
or affect a gentle, generous and
princely heart ; and if no ex-
pression should occur therein,
capable of offending the most

A refined

refined delicacy, I shall think
my time and labour happily be-
stowed, and your Majesty's ap-
probation will complete the fe-
licity of,

Madam,

Your Majesty's

most faithful,

most dutiful, and

most devoted servant,

GORGES EDMOND HOWARD.

T O
MR. H O W A R D,
ON HIS
T R A G E D Y.

BY PHILIP DOYNE, Esq;

HOWARD, who can't restore a sinking stage,
That desert now a mournful ruin lies,
To *Avon's* hallow'd banks with awful eyes
Adoring bend, where erst the *British* sage
In tragic pomp, and buskin'd equipage,
Rov'd in majestic wildness; round him rise
Heroic forms—here, *Ariel* cleaves the skies,
There, Northern Demons in dire rites engage.

Then, while thy soul with sacred ardour glows,
Call up some Hero from the times of old,
Rever'd for glorious deeds and mighty woes;
On such alone, the muse her wreath bestows.
While *Albion's* youth enraptur'd shall behold,
In thy heroic strains, his various sorrows told.

'Tis done—what awful scenes arise to fight!
What solemn strains alarm th' attentive ear!
In Eastern pomp, the brother kings appear;
Rivals in love and empire, lawless might
O'erturns the throne of virtue's sacred right;
While Tyranny and Lust in wild despair,
Drive from the palace the Circassian fair,
Helpless to wander thro' the dreary night.

Athens of old—the queen of arts and arms,
The mighty *Sophoclean* genius blest'd
With terror *Oedipus* the soul alarms,
Antigone with gentle sorrow charms.

Terror and Pity rule the human breast,
And both at once thy muse hath gloriously express'd.

Persons of the Drama.

M E N.

ALMORAN,	}	Brothers and joint Kings of <i>Persia</i> .
HAMET,		
OSMIN,	}	A <i>Persian</i> Nobleman, Grand Vizier.
OMAR,		
CALED,	}	The <i>Sedre</i> , or chief Priest.
AXARES,		
ZAMA,	}	An <i>Armenian</i> Prince, chief commander of the <i>Persian</i> Forces.
MIRVAN,		
	}	Two <i>Persian</i> Noblemen, Friends to <i>Hamet</i> .

W O M E N.

ALMEYDA,	}	A <i>Circassian</i> Lady, Daughter to <i>Abdalla</i> , Ambassador to the Court of <i>Persia</i> .
ELMIRA,		
	}	Princess of <i>Persia</i> , Sister to <i>Almorán</i> and <i>Hamet</i> .

Soldiers, Guards, Attendants, Mutes,

SCENE the City of *Ispahan*, the Capital of *Persia*,
and Places adjacent thereto.

ALMEYDA:

ALMEYDA:

OR, THE

RIVAL KINGS.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

The Palace Garden.

Enter OSMIN and an OLD MAN.

OSMIN.

RELATE the hist'ry of my birth and fortune
Of which you seek to speak, and whence your
knowledge.

Old man. That day, the bloody fire of our late
monarch

Your royal father slew (the pious *Selim*,)
And overturn'd your house, the queen your mother
(Of you then pregnant, now full fifty summers)
Untimely was deliver'd. I was then
One of the household, and a chief attendant,
To whose strict care, you were in trust committed.
Straight, I convey'd you to a shepherd's hut
In an adjacent wood, whose wife, it happen'd,
Had the same day an infant male brought forth,
Which just expir'd, as we had reach'd the dwelling.
The friendly shepherd plac'd you in its stead,
And she, a stranger to the kind deceit,

As her own offspring rear'd you, till you grew,
Of age for the first rudiments of science ;
When, to the public schools you were confign'd,
Where, you with rapid course all youths excell'd.
At length, your fame reaching the royal ear,
Your fortune grew apace.

Osmin. Without more proof,
All this may as a forgery be rejected.

Old man. There are upon your body various marks,
Which, at your birth, were well observ'd by several,
Of those who were the followers of your fortune ;
Chiefly, a fable mole on your left arm,
Of more than usual size.

Osmin. Such marks I have ;
Yet are not all who could attest these verities,
Save you, by time and accident remov'd ?

Old man. From nature's course, there yet may be
enow

Who (were it brought to test) cou'd vouch the facts.

Osmin. But where have you sojourned since that
hour ?

Old man. In exile far remote, until the death
Of the usurper's son, the mighty *Solyman*,
Whose long and glorious reign all hopes defeated
Of those, who were devoted to your house.
Since when, I have in close concealment dwelt,
Yet not far hence, in hourly expectation
That fortune might at length return propitious,
And now, the wish'd for period seems approaching.

Osmin. (Stepping apart.) Yes, 'tis at hand ; the
storm is gathering thick.

Whilst devastation with gigantic stride
Stalks uncontroll'd o'er this devoted land : —
Without, the *Tartar* almost at our gates ;
Within, such feuds between these brother kings,
As can but end, in their concurrent ruin.
Shall I not then avail me of the time ?
Shall I not seize this throne, the ancient seat
Of my renown'd progenitors for ages ?
But hither *Caled* comes — 'tis somewhat strange,

He

He should pursue me at this early hour.
(*To the Old Man.*) Hence for a while retire. (*Exit.*)

Enter CALED.

Caled. Great Vizier, hail!

Osmin. First, let me greet you, on your safe return
From all the perils of your high command
In distant climes, to this your native soil;
Next, on the just renown your arms have won,
And all those honours which the state decrees you.

Caled. My Lord, your friendship leads your
tongue to praises,
Which far outweigh all merit I can claim.
But much I'm griev'd, from ev'ry voice to hear
The sinking glory of this mighty Empire.
War, like a boist'rous and devouring sea,
Bursts o'er all bounds and floats our plains with gore.
These northern spoilers (like the noxious swarms,
That blast with baneful breath the vernal bud)
Thrice, through the gloomy horrors of the night,
Thrice, through the sultry heat of scorching noon,
With unremitted speed, have urg'd their way:
And now 'tis rumour'd, that in *Hyra's* desert,
Not distant two days march, they stand embattled.

Osmin. To tell our dread King *Almeran* these
tidings,
Rous'd me to seek him at this early moment,
In yon dark grove, his much accustom'd walk.

Caled. To me, so long from *Persia's* regions absent,
'Tis strange, that thus our two young kings abandon
Their fertile fields to waste and desolation.

Osmin. Equally jealous, they avoid all conference,
Nor trust each other with the sole command.
In aught that may occur of high import;
Wherefore, on the *Armenian* prince *Axares*
Devolves the weight of war, and even now,
Chos'n by our rival kings, he leads those troops,
With which, ere while great *Solyman* prevail'd,
Against confederate worlds.

Caled.

Can they resign

The

The wreath of conquest, to a stranger's brow,
Both great in arms, but chiefly *Almorán*,
He, some moons ere their warlike father slept,
Twice, to their frozen deserts chas'd these savages,
Who even then had dar'd attempt our frontiers.

Osmin. For martial prowess, none bore higher
glory :

Yet now, from discontent, resign'd to indolence,
He lives immur'd within the soft Seraglio,
Deaf to the call of fortitude and glory.

Caled. But say, my lord, why did our late wife
king

Divide the strength of *Asia's* noblest empire
Between his sons ? for in the womb though twinn'd,
Yet *Almorán* was ever held first born,
And rightful heir to *Persia's* boundless realms.

Osmin. To temper with the gentle *Hamet's* mildness
The spirit which he griev'd to see in *Almorán*.

Caled. Souls thus discordant ne'er can yoke in
friendship ;

Besides, the envied honours of a throne
No partner brook.

Osmin. So the event has prov'd ;
For when the will of *Solyman* appear'd,
The fatal will, which shar'd the throne and pow'r,
Which *Almorán* from birth deem'd only his,
Indignant he withdrew and shunn'd resort ;
Our holy Prophet and his rites blaspheming,
And curs'd his country, royal fire, and fortune.
The state stood motionless, for if not summon'd,
'Twas instant death, but to approach his presence.

Caled. Who then first dar'd to break on his retire-
ment ?

Osmin. *Omar*, vicegerent of our holy prophet,
That good old man, that oracle of truth,
Embolden'd by the many faithful services
That his sage counsel oft' had done the state,
Assum'd the dang'rous task, by me attended.

Caled. Thou speak'st him justly. Well I knew
his worth,
When the great *Solyman* selected him

From

From all the Imams of the sacred mosques
As the preceptor of his much lov'd *Hamet*.

Osmin. The king alarm'd, quick started from his
sofa,

And drew his poniard, ere he mark'd the victim ;
But prostrate when he view'd the hoary sage,
By virtue's presence aw'd, awhile he paus'd :
The pious *Omar* dauntless spoke his errand ;
The monarch grew enrag'd, his eyes flash'd fire ;
When sudden with these words--' Ha ! this from thee ?'
He plung'd the deadly weapon in his bosom.

Caled. Disastrous stroke ! how could he rashly
punish

With such fell rancour for such slight offence ?

Osmin. It had besides been whisper'd in the court,
That 'twas this priest had schem'd the late king's will.

Caled. And doth he still retain this gloom of soul ?
This negligence, so fatal to the state ?

Osmin. If e'er he acts, it seems a painful task ;

For he each moment of his life deems wasted,

Which is not sacrific'd to sensual appetite.

And now, although the chambers of his palace

Shine with the brightest beauties of the East,

'Tis joyless all, cloy'd yet unsatisfy'd,

His harass'd sense still languishes for more ;

But above all, he pants for that fam'd beauty,

The fair *Circassian*, lord *Abdalla*'s daughter.

Caled. What ! the fix'd consort of our monarch
Hamet ?

For such report, I've heard since my arrival,

Osmin. The secret poison preys upon his vitals,

Nor sports, nor wine, nor music can assuage it.

All these but serve to nourish the disease. —

Caled. But soft, is not that he who bends his way
Along yon distant walk ?

Osmin. 'Tis surely so.

Thus often from the midnight hour till morn,

Lonely he wanders through those gloomy labyrinths.

Behind these trees we may unseen observe him.

Caled. What strange convulsions seem to shake
his frame !

But

But now he moves this way, I shall withdraw.

(*Caled goes off.*)

Osmin. What though in friendship we've been
long united,

And his preferment I have much promoted,
Yet could I wish he had not yet return'd.

He's of a spirit strong in its fidelity

To his appointed trust—which with his zeal

For this fell tyrant, damp my soul's aspirings.

(*He retires behind some trees.*)

S C E N E II.

ALMORAN.

Almorán. 'Twere better not to be, than thus to be.

There's not a dungeon wretch to torture doom'd,

Who may not boast a state of ease to mine.

Spoil'd of my birth right, of those joys, those tran-
ports

To which on tow'ring wings my fancy soar'd,

And in their stead, (curs'd fate!) what have I gain'd?

In crown a partner, and in love a rival!

O! 'tis too much for patience to endure—

And yet, he hath by flatt'ring arts so won

The public voice; and our great father's memory

Stands so rever'd, contest might yet be dang'rous:

But soft, methought, I just now saw our vizier;

An engine, none more fit to aid my purpose.

Osmin appears and prostrates himself.

Vizier of *Persia*, rise; you come in season.

Osmin. Still may my services forerun your wish!

So shall each toil and danger be a pleasure

And life itself well lost.

Almorán.

Am I a king?

Osmin. A king, dread Sir!

Almorán.

Ay, ay, a king by halves.

A puppet king—accurs'd!—hell form'd will!

Better a slave—what says the public voice?

Osmin.

Osmin. But that the pious *Omar* gave it sanction,
Whose ev'ry word was sacred held as oracle
By ev'ry rank throughout the realms of *Persia*,
Ne'er would the people ———

Almorán. Death and perdition! what,
Shall base—born slaves presume to circumscribe
The power of kings, and canton out dominions?
O! I shall burst with rage.

Osmin. By our great prophet!
There's scarce a vassal in this mighty empire,
But waits impatient for your royal summons
To rise in arms and vindicate your right.

Almorán. Still have I mark'd you zealous in my
service,
Nor shall you find me an ungrateful debtor.

Osmin. The Gods, great king, have sovereign
pow'r bestow'd,
As means of sov'reign joy, on those they love;
Unbounded sway is for unbounded pleasure,
The lot of heroes with our holy prophet ———
But then to think, for whom you've been despoil'd!

Almorán. And shall I bear it? can I live to see
This shadow of a king, this ape of royalty
Share *Persia's* throne? restrain my daring soul,
Whose boundless wish the world's whole empire
grasps?

An abject wretch more fit to whine in mosques,
To priest-rul'd matrons, and fanatic dreamers,
Triumph victorious o'er me in the heart
Of that all conqu'ring fair, *Abdalla's* daughter,
For whom I burn with never ceasing flames?

Osmin. She shines by all confess'd the brightest
maid

The East can boast of in its store of beauties.
Still in remembrance, shall I bear the day,
Her father made his entrance as ambassador,
To pay the homage of *Circassia's* realms.
She rode beside him on a burnish'd car;
But such a blaze of charms, eye hath not seen.
Th' enraptur'd gazers stood entranc'd with wonder,
And

And murmur'd blessings as she pass'd along.
But by what means could you obtain the view
Of this choice treasure, which your happy rival
Hoards up as jealous of the very light?

Almorán. 'Twas on a summer's morn, just when
the dawn

Had usher'd in the blushing beams of day,
As at the palace battlements I stood,
To catch the cooling breeze, I spy'd the fair,
When to a fount, in an adjoining garden,
With some attendants she repair'd to bathe —
Around her lovely form, a slender robe
Floated luxuriant, white as virgin snow
'Till by the brighter splendour of her limbs
Outshone, it faded, as th' enamour'd Zephyrs,
Wantonly sporting, fann'd the folds aside.
But when her veil and garment were remov'd,
And all her native charms blaz'd full to view,
Not more refulgent beams the silver Moon,
When from the vesture of a wintry cloud
Through whose pellucid veil she faintly glimmers,
Bursting she pours forth all her peerless lustre.
Dazzled a while I stood, quite lost in extacy,
And ne'er have since known rest.

Osmin. To-morrow's eve,
'Tis rumour'd, has been fix'd for her espousals.

Almorán. It must not — shall not be —

Osman. Pronounce your will.

Almorán. Yet let me pause a while — the time's
not apt,

Invasion at our gates, our subjects mutinous;
And then, this partner monarch seeks to win,
By arts most servile, popular applause;
Whilst I disdain to yield, or flatter those
Whom fate hath doom'd the vassals of my sway.
This day, *Anares* the *Armenian* prince
Is to relate before us and our nobles
The answer we demanded of these *Tartars*.
'Till then, revolve in mind our deep designs.

(*Almorán goes off*)
Osmin. Divided empire — disappointed love —

The

The basis these of all my mighty prospects.
 His haughty spirit, thence will ne'er know rest
 Till *Persia's* crown and this *Circassian* beauty
 Are his without a rival—and for this,
Hamet must bleed—bleed by a brother's hand.
 Why, be it so:—'twill make him more detested.
 Then, whilst in pleasure sunk he wastes the day,
 To sweep him hence and vault into his seat,
 Will be no arduous task.—It must be so.
 Should fortune speed my schemes, then shall each
 tongue
 Applaud the just assertion of my claim,
 If not, all must confess I greatly dar'd.

(*He goes off.*)

S C E N E III.

A Mansion near the Palace.

To ALMEYDA enter ELMIRA.

Elmira. May all the transports, that for ever wait
 On virtuous love, be thine ! let me salute thee
 By the much wish'd for names of queen and sister.
 But was it kind, well suited to that friendship,
 Which our fond souls have plighted to each other,
 That I should be a stranger to these tidings,
 Until I shar'd them with the general ear ?

Almeyda. Censure me not, sweet princess, till you
 hear me.

It was his will, who must rule mine for ever.

Elmira. I'm satisfy'd—'twas friendship's jealousy,
 Which, true like mine, can ill endure reserve.
 But fain would I be told, most happy maid,
 How first his love began, and how it grew ;
 For had'st thou been, if possible, more fair,
 Than those immortal daughters of delight,
 Reserv'd to crown our holy prophet's love,
 And he a stranger to thy worth of soul,
 He would have view'd thee as the painted flower,

B

Whose

Whose beauty ceases, with the morn that rear'd it,
Form'd but to charm the sense.

Almeyda.

You may remember,

Sometime before great *Solyman*, your sire,
Was from his throne to paradise remov'd,
Circassia, then renown'd o'er all the *East*
For sports of exercise and feats of arms,
Thither, the ardent prince, (in thirst of glory)
Pass'd in disguise to practise with our youths,
As a young *Persian* soldier named *Zanger*;
But his demeanour, was to all so courteous,
With manly beauty, dignity of aspect,
That all esteem'd him, far beyond his seeming.
When, on a time of solemn festival,
Sacred to mirth, to beauty, and to arms,
Winning the prize from all the rival princes,
Radiant in golden arms, and trophied spoils,
And all the grandeur of the gorgeous East,
He laid it at my feet, with such a grace,
It stamp'd his image on my heart for ever.

Elmira. Saw you him soon again?

Almeyda.

Not till the night,

A fire consum'd the mansion where I lodg'd,
Contiguous to some buildings of the palace;
For shortly after our first happy meeting,
He from our coast, was summon'd to the funeral,
Of your renowned sire, just then deceas'd,
At the same time, my father being order'd,
As our ambassador to hasten hither,
To pay the usual tribute to your kings,
I did accompany him; for ever since
He lost the much lov'd partner of his soul,
(A loss, we never can enough deplore,)
I've sought to soften all his hours of sorrow
With dutious love—pardon my gushing tears.

Elmira. No, let them flow, they ease the burthen'd
heart.

Yet much I wish to hear your story's sequel.

Almeyda. The flames o'er all the lofty dome had
rag'd,

Ere

Ere I awoke; rous'd by the piercing cries
Of an attendant slave, that in them perish'd.
Frantic with fear, I hasted to the casement,
Whither my shrieks brought numbers, 'mongst the rest
The royal *Hamet*, as I after found.
Who call'd aloud, that I should cast me down.
At length, no other choice being left but death,
Trusting to fate, I from the window leap'd.

Elmira. 'Tis strange how you escap'd; the height
was great.

Almeyda. I was receiv'd ere I could reach the
pavement;

When straight I was convey'd to his apartment,
Through the tumultuous croud, as death insensible:
But when I had regain'd my scatter'd spirits,
Finding my head reclin'd upon his bosom,
No cov'ring o'er me but a slender garment,
In a strange place, I should have straight expir'd,
Had not my father, at the instant enter'd.

Elmira. But all this while, did not your soul recal
The fond impressions of your dear deliverer?

Almeyda. I was by various passions so disturb'd,
The features, once so dear, escap'd my notice.

Elmira. Nor yet, had he remembrance?

Almeyda. O! he had.

And when my father, the succeeding day,
Prostrate appear'd to pay our duteous thanks,
Instant he rais'd him, and express'd his wish,
Most earnestly, that I had also come;
And will'd, it might be so without delay.
This when I heard, alarm'd, I knew not wherefore,]
My heart all flutter'd like a frighted bird;
But 'twas my father's will, and I obey'd.
But think, my princess, what was my surprize,
When in my life's protector I descri'd
The conqu'ror of my heart.

Elmira. And what ensu'd?

Almeyda. The thrilling transport so o'erpow'rd
my soul,

That I was near bereft of every sense,

Which he observing, gently took my hand,
 Gave it with soft emotion to my father,
 Vowing, he would his life much rather part with.
 Then, gazing on me, he again address'd him:

"This precious treasure, will you now restore me?"

"A slave I seek not, but I court a queen;

"If she can yield her heart in love to *Hamet*,

"Not her hand only, to a king in form,

"I will be her's alone, she mine for ever."

My father only could assent by silence,

Such was his transport at my happy fortune.

Elmira. Our holy prophet speed the happy union!

But 'tis some nine moons since; whence this delay?

Almeyda. In the first tide of grief he vow'd that
 mourning

To the lov'd memory of your royal sire.

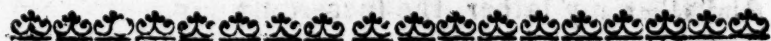
Elmira. Say, when's the happy hour that crowns
 your love?

Almeyda. At eve to-morrow in the royal mosque.

Elmira. With joy unfeign'd I will attend you
 thither.

Almeyda. Kind Heav'n! impow'r me to repay this
 goodness.

(*They go off.*)



A C T II.

S C E N E I.

A Gallery in the Palace.

HAMET alone.

Hamet. **T**HIS brother's strange deportment much
 alarms me:

And all things round us wear a fearful aspect.

His heart, I know, is desperate as base —

O royalty!

O royalty ! mere bubble — dream of bliss !
The toil-tir'd peasant, when his task is o'er,
On mossy couch enjoys that sweet repose,
Which flies from palaces and beds of down.

Enter Osmin at a small distance.

Osmin. (Aside.) Alone, as I could wish ; now is the
time,

I must provoke his gentle soul to rage :
Already, I've inflam'd his brother's fury.

(He advances and prostrates himself.)

Hamet. Vizier, arise ! your countenance bespeaks
Business of much import — you have mine ear.

Osmin. Most puissant prince ! permit your faithful
slave,
Most humbly to remind you of the hour
Appointed for the *Armenian* prince in council,
There to relate the issue of his embassy.
And the fierce *Tartar's* answer.

Hamet. First declare
Have you as yet disclos'd as I directed,
My purpos'd nuptial's to the king my brother ?

Osmin. I did without delay.

Hamet. You seem perplex'd —
Wherefore that pause ? why fix'd your eyes on
earth ?

Why such preface of some approaching ill ?
Unfold yourself.

Osmin. Of heroes, though the first !
Are there not strokes within the reach of fortune,
Which unexpected may surprize and sink
Your fortitude of soul ?

Hamet. What can this mean ?
Some fearful secret lurks beneath that question ;
Explain it quickly, if you prize my favour.

Osmin. Could you submit, were it fate's hard
decree,
And yield your lov'd *Almeyda* to a rival ?

Hamet. *Almeyda!* — rival! — fate! — you talk in
mystery —
Torture me not. — you put me on the rack.
By our great prophet! neither crown, nor life,
Is half so dear to me as my *Almeyda*.

Osmin. If thus the mere idea can alarm you,
What if this fair were torn from your embrace?

Hamet. Without more stay of circumstance re-
lieve me.

Not woe pronounc'd, is to the soul so dreadful,
As doubt and dark surmise.

Osmin. Then hear, dread prince &
When by your mandate I had so disclos'd
Your purpos'd nuptials to your royal brother —
At mention of the name of your *Almeyda*,
Sudden he started; fury fill'd his aspect;
I stood resign'd to fate; when, quick as thought,
He check'd the bursting passion; said, " 'twas well,"
Then, with his hand, he wav'd me from his presence.

Hamet. Wherefore? O speak? — what knows he
of *Almeyda*?

See her, he could not.

Osmin. Sir, he has seen her.

Hamet. Where? how? — when? — some Demon
has bewray'd her.

Osmin. By chance sometime she bath'd, and from
that hour —

Hamet. Now I'm a wretch indeed, — tell, tell it all.

Osmin. By all her beauties fir'd, with love he rages.

Hamet. Call it not love; the very thought's pro-
fane.

His lewd licentious fancy never knew,
The enchanting raptures of a virtuous flame,
His ministers of lust range all the East,
For the first beauties; that a new variety
May rouse the languor of his fated appetite.
One fair I only claim, and of that one,
'This most inhuman brother would despoil me.
Dishonour blast me! (should he but attempt
'To soil the lustre of this brilliant gem)

If

If my chaste mother's blood, that in his veins
Flows equal as in mine, should stay mine arm!
Nor should this sword be sheath'd till I had vengeance.

Osmin. It works as I could wish. (*aside.*) O mighty
prince!

Should it e'er reach your angry rival's knowledge,
That I thus have presum'd, there is no torture,
He would not think too mild: though (witness
heav'n!)

'Tis love of peace alone that urg'd me to it;
With this regard, that to prevent disasters
Is easier far than heal them when befall'n.

Hamet. Fear not! your caution shall have just
observance.

Proceed you to the council, I shall follow.

(*Osmin goes off.*)

This vizier seems my friend, yet he's a statesman,
And in the trammels of self-weal so fetter'd,
'Twere dang'rous trusting him.—But he returns.

Osmin re-enters.

Osmin. Illustrious prince, your brother with the
nobles
In council wait you.

Hamet. I shall instant join them.
(*He goes off.*)

Osmin. Having wrought *Hamet* thus to my design;
I know not now an obstacle but *Caled.*
Yet even he the mighty work shall forward:
Weak in his judgment, strong in his attachment,
He may be hurried into rash extremes,
Which must undo the cause he strives to serve.
This to effect shall all my powers employ.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE

S C E N E II.

The Presence Chamber, ALMORAN, HAMET, the
Nobles and chief Officers.

AXARES enters.

Axares. Illustrious rulers of the Eastern world!
In due observance of your high behests,
I hasten to the camp of the barbarians,
There to demand, why thus with hostile rage
They unprovok'd had ravag'd your dominions;
Conducted to their chieftain, named *Othar*,
He, with stern aspect, bold and brief thus answer'd:
"We are adventurers of a common world,
"And follow in our search, of wealth and glory,
"Where fate and fortune lead. Our sport is war."

Almorán. I am for further parley, not more hazard;
Some yielded terms may purchase their retreat.

Hamet. Far be remov'd from us such dang'rous
What! league with plunderers? submit to slavery?
Or hold of them a subject realm in fealty?
Should this be known to these our fierce invaders,
Soon would they storm our gates. O *Persia! Persia!*
Great seat of empire, that so oft hast given
Monarchs and conqu'rors to the Eastern world,
How art thou fall'n? O *Solyman!* my father!
Were but thine hallow'd relicks borne before us,
They more would fright these outcasts of the earth
Than hosts of *Persian* troops, such as are now.
No more, our youths the smoking chariots drive;
No more, in forests chase the foaming boar,
Nor rein the fiery steed, nor glory court;
All these are now exchang'd for wanton dance,
For am'rous song, for feast and revelry,
And ev'ry soul enervating delight.

Almorán.

Almorán. Brother, the rigid censures you've bestow'd,

Ill suit the time's most dang'rous circumstance :
Wherefore, henceforth, by the great fount of light !
I shall all counsel shun with thee, nor rest
Until the crown, my lawful right of heritage,
Is mine unpartner'd, mine without a rival.

Hamet. Full well thou know'st, my right with
thine is equal ;

And though thy pow'r were boundless as thy pride,
I dare proclaim that right I will maintain.

Almorán. Unsheathe the sword then, and let it decide.

Hamet. First, to the states of *Persia* and the people
I will my cause refer.

Almorán. To this good sword
Alone shall I appeal, which ne'er shall rust
Till *Persia's* diadem be solely mine.

(*He goes off.*)

Hamet. My lords, I trust your wisdom will be wary,
That nought which hath here pass'd between your
kings,
Should (at this season) reach the vulgar ear.
You, noble youth, (to *Axares*) with all our other
captains,

Already to your stations are appointed.——

My countrymen ! my friends ! O ! suffer not
These luckless feuds to hurt the gen'ral cause.

United, we may hold in scorn these savages ;

Divided, we must fall an easy sacrifice ;

So each man to his duty——*Axares*, slay.

(*They all except Axares withdraw.*)

Thou'rt now the only friend, since *Omar's* fall,

To whom my soul can safely tell its sorrows.

From our first infant years together rear'd,

In danger oft' by mutual aid preserv'd,

I hold thee, as a portion of myself.

Axares. Long, long, may the renowned *Hamet* live
To shield his people, and support an empire !

Hamet. O ! prince, there is (besides) a tender
subject,

For

For which alone my soul can deign to fear.

Axares. My faithful heart with ardour pants to learn

The danger that can thus alarm my prince,
And shake your noble fortitude.

Hamet. Know then,
'Tis not alone my share of *Persia's* throne,
Of which this lawless brother seeks to rob me;
But this insatiate, lustful, bloody tyrant,
Thirsts for my life; for more than life, *Axares*,
He burns, to ravish my *Almeyda* from me.

Axares. First perish all the tyrants of the globe!
Hath he not dar'd you to unsheath the sword?
And now's the very tide of opportunity,
While ev'ry happy circumstance conspires
To aid the great design. Without our walls,
A num'rous host of *Persia's* warlike sons
Embattled stand awaiting me their leader,
Midst all these troops, trust me, there's scarce a man,
Who was not ripe, for desperate revolt,
Ere *Omar* fell beneath his murd'ring sword;
The nobles too, yea, ev'ry rank in *Persia*,
All groan beneath his yoke, all with relief,
And all on thee alone have fix'd their hopes.
What then forbids, but that ———

Hamet. Pronounce it not.
I shudder at the thought.—All gracious Heaven!
From civil rage, (that many headed monster,)
Save in thy mercy—ever save my people!
O prince! if once this fury be unchain'd,
As soon might we th'impetuous flame repress,
Or stay the torrent of the mountain flood.
Nor death, nor pestilence, nor all the woes
Of wild ambition, or the thirst of glory,
Such dire effects produce—all ties dissolv'd,
That nature, love, or friendship had cemented,
For the fell rage of malice and revenge.
Nor end its evils when its spirit dies,
But, like some foul contagion in the blood,
Transmit their bane to ages yet unborn.

What

What then, shall I, vicegerent here of Heaven,
Plunge all the nations to my charge committed,
In this calamity, these hideous woes?
Shall I, a mortal, fate's dread pow'r usurp,
And from th' Almighty wrest the bolt of vengeance?
No, rather fall the ruin on this head!
But O! protect, good heav'n! protect my country!

Axares. How bless'd the nations where such
virtue reigns!

But are not your espousals to be soon?

Hamet. To-morrow was to've been the happy day:
But first this open, this ill boding breach,
Instant attention claims, and every mean
Which prudence can suggest, else all is lost.
Wherefore, I'll hasten to apprize my love
Of the delay it threatens to our bliss.
You, to the field, to bind your brows with honour.
O, valiant prince! when was a time before,
That my lov'd country's voice, (that sacred call)
Urg'd me to arms, and I the conflict shunn'd?
Kind heav'n restore thee to thy friend, thy *Hamet*,
(A victor with triumphant wreaths adorn'd!

(*He goes off.*)

Axares. Never, oh! never may I thence return!
And then? (too flatt'ring thought, yet ah! how vain?)
The fair, the dear, divinely fair *Almeyda*
May heave a sigh, and drop a silent tear.
But soft, my soul!—Why all these love-sick dreams?
Is she not soon to be another's right?
The destin'd consort of my prince? my friend?
Yet, witness heav'n! I knew not of their loves,
Until my heart was past recovery lost,
But wherefore stay I here? the battle calls,
I'll rush where danger wears its blackest front;
There, there to meet inevitable fate.

(*He goes off.*)

SCENE

S C E N E III.

ALMEYDA *alone.*

Almeyda. This message from lord *Hamet* in the manner,
In which it was deliver'd, much alarms me.

Enter ELMIRA.

Elmira. Pardon this sudden entrance on your privacy!

But since we parted, as I pass'd the palace,
What time the nobles were from council moving,
Methought each visage seem'd with horror struck,
As if some sad calamity impended.
And now, 'tis rumour'd, that my rival brothers
Have to each other vow'd eternal enmity.

Almeyda. Heav'n, that such feuds should 'twixt
such kindred rage!

Elmira. O! wonder not: they are in souls as different

As in their persons like—fierce and impetuous,
The haughty *Almorán*, all virtue spurns;
Whilst the delight of all, the gen'rous *Hamet*,
Was ever gentle, as the southern gale
That breathes upon the bosom of the spring.
And yet should wanton opposition thwart him,
He firmly will pursue the just design
Which honour dictates, or the public good,
Though tumults rise, and faction swell the storm.

Almeyda. 'Tis as my heart presag'd, for oh! but
now,

One of th' illustrious *Hamet's* chief attendants,
With visage pale and wild, trembling all o'er,
In fault'ring accents, spoke his near approach.
Ah! love, relentless tyrant of the heart!
Hast thou no pleasure, unallay'd with pain?

What

What anguish waits the disappointed passion?
And in the mutual flame, what endless fears
Imagination forms, to rack the soul?
Protect, good heav'n! the lord of all my wishes,
Spare him, and pour your vengeance all on me.

(*A knocking is heard.*)

Elmira. Permit me to retire.—Ere next we meet,
May heav'n dispel these gloomy clouds of fortune,
And nought but sun-shine meet thy future days!

Almeyda. Eternal blessings crown your matchless
virtues!

(*Elmira goes off.*)

Enter HAMET.

Hamet. Ye guardian powers, surround my love
for ever!

The time is pregnant with such dire disasters,
That thy for ever faithful *Hamet* hastens
To tell his love, that those much wish'd for moments,
Favour'd by fate, to light up all his bliss
Should be inviolate, unmix'd with sorrow.
How pale she grows!—good heaven! what have I
done? (*Aside.*)

Why swells thine eyes, thus with the bursting tear,
Which trembling hangs before their radiant brightness,
As mists before the morn?—O! answer me.—

Almeyda. Pardon, my lord, the weakness of my
sex!

An host of warring thoughts, of hopes and fears,
Of joys and doubts, alas! of dark forebodings,
Of late possests, and sink my soul to sadness;
And all my restless slumbers still are haunted
With airy shapes, and phantasies most fearful.

Hamet. Soul of my soul! these visionary terrors,
Seldom are absent from the tender heart:
But *Hamet's* life shall be thy constant buckler.

Almeyda. Alas! my lord, I shudder at the thought,
When I reflect upon the heavy trials,
To which my envy'd fortune may expose me.

C

When

When I consider how the haughty *Almorán*
May scorn the choice your heart hath deign'd to
make,

Which might have honour'd *Asia's* proudest princess ;
But above all—O ! should yourself repent !——

Hamet. By thy dear self I swear, (nor doubt my
truth,

For on thy fair opinion rests my being,)
But that I am not master of my fate,
Nor have or choice, or will but for my people,
I could henceforth without regret renounce
The pomp of diadems, and blaze of greatness,
To dwell with thee in some secure retirement.
Nor envy fear, so far thy virtues pass
All imitation, that it ne'er can reach thee.
Awhile, the public charge demands my duty.
O ! let me then on this lov'd hand impress
The farewell of an heart, without thee desolate.

(*He goes off.*)

Almeyda. Heav'n ! what is hope ? that long, long
look'd for happiness ?

That coming joy, the sigh of expectation ?
The distant bliss approaches, 'tis at hand,
Just in our grasp, we think to seize, to hold it ;
When, at the very moment of possessing,
'Tis gone, 'tis vanish'd, wafted far away,
Never, alas ! oh ! never to return. (Exit.

S C E N E IV.

The Palace Garden.

ALMORAN.

Almorán. I ordered *Caled*, captain of our guards
To meet me on this walk. He is a man,
Who from the lowest ebb of fortune's current,
I have to station rais'd beyond his hopes ;
And much appears to be of grateful spirit

In

In such we may confide.—But he is here.

Enter CALED.

Henceforth I nominate you chief commander
Of all our hosts, in this and ev'ry region ;
Which honour'd rank, to our deserv'd reproach,
Too long hath been entrusted to a stranger.

Caled. Words cannot testify my faithful gratitude.
Deeds must supply their want.—Your will, my
Sovereign ?

Almorán. Then see, that secretly a trusty party
Of your command be ready, well appointed,
To seize th' *Armenian* prince, my foe profess'd,
And give him to my vengeance. If sudden,
'Twill bar resistance, and success secure.

For this your warrant, you have here, my signet.
Yet hold—awhile you must attend at hand ;
Some weighty matters of more urgent quality,
Demand attention to be first accomplish'd.
So now retire, and wait my quickest summons.

Caled. I have no will, but as my Prince directs.
(*He goes off.*)

Almorán. Yet farther to secure him I have rais'd
Such jealousies between him and our vizier,
That each who best can serve me shall contend.

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

The Palace.

HAMET *alone.*

Hamet, **R**OBBD of my right!—my crown!—
yet what is that?—
My brother too!—against my father's will?—

Ev'n that too.—But *Almeyda*!—

(*Flourish of trumpets.*)

What is this!—

An herald is introduced.

Presumptuous slave!

Herald. Pardon, dread prince, my station!
I come, with summons from the mighty *Almorán*.
Your presence he demands at noon to-morrow,
In the broad space, before the royal mosque;
There to assert (in presence of the nobles,
The priests of ev'ry order, and the people,)
And justify your claim to half the throne.
Where, if you fail t' appear, 'twill be pronounc'd,
You have that claim relinquish'd in his favour.

Hamet. Vassal, away—nor farther tempt my wrath.
(*Herald goes off*)

Meet him! for what?—admit my right is doubtful?
And that, when ev'ry engine is at work,
Which, in foul deeds, to pride and lust can minister?—
Yet numbers, proof against his wiles and menaces,
The first in rank and pow'r have vow'd to see
The *will* of their lov'd *Solyman* supported—
Their counsel at this crisis were of moment. (*Exit.*)

S C E N E II.

The Palace.

Enter OSMIN and CALED.

Osmín. *Omar* alive! say'st thou?—death to my
hopes!

(*Aside.*)

Caled. At eve, as I approach'd the royal
mosque,

Two factions stood oppos'd, with rage transported;
And each with shouts proclaim'd a diff'rent king.

Osmín.

Osmin. Did any shout for *Hamet*?

Caled.

At first but few;

Until this sage (who stood above the rest,
Veil'd in the habit of an ancient hermit,
With venerable front all silver'd o'er)
Besought permitted speech; which though obtain'd,
Yet in submissive, seeming awful silence,
Awhile he paus'd, as cautious to offend:
Then, thrice he bow'd his head. The factious
crowd,

Thence far more urgent grew that he should speak.

Osmin. The practis'd artifice of each incendiary,
To cheat the giddy crowd. I pray proceed.

Caled. At length, with aspect mild, he humbly
question'd,

“ If any prince of all the globe's first monarchs,
“ Equall'd in worth their glorious, godlike *Hamet*?
“ Whose love was as the *Persian* realms extensive,
“ And life, a constant course of watchful toils,
“ And ceaseless study for his people's safety?”
Then look'd around, as pausing for reply;
But not a whisper murmuring dissent;
With out-stretch'd arms, he boldly then demanded,
“ Had they no gratitude? Could they forget,
“ How oft' (when lawless pow'r of life regardless,
“ Had ev'n to wanton massacre condemn'd them)
“ This prince stood forth, and quell'd the tyrant's
“ fury?

“ So chaste, so strict in his regard to truth;
“ He would not deviate from her sacred path,
“ Either to win or to secure an empire.”

Osmin. 'Tis he——mine enemy——(*aside*). But
the event?

Caled. Roaring for liberty, a while they rag'd;
Till his soft phrase appeas'd the rising tumult,
Charm'd it to peace, and won their ears to reason;
When dauntless he pronounc'd, “ That real liberty
“ Could only be of lawful rule the offspring,
“ Which, by restraining each from doing wrong,
“ Assur'd their rights to all; that none e'er held

" Those rights more sacred, than th' exalted *Hamet* ;
 " Whilst bloody *Almorán*, all subjects deem'd
 " Th' appointed slaves of kings." Yea, in their
 rage,

They ev'n dar'd to call him, murdering tyrant ;
 Who slew their *Omar*, and aloud claim'd vengeance.
 On this, the crafty priest (casting aside
 The outward garb, in which he stood disguis'd)
 Burst into view.—Amaz'd, awhile they stood :
 Then rushing on, they rear'd him on their shoulders,
 With shouts of joy, that pierc'd the vault of heav'n !

Osmin. These tumults may advance my bold design.

Both cannot live, and both perhaps may fall.

(*Aside.*

(*To Caled*) This is sedition, treason, foul rebellion !
 But 'tis most strange, how you escap'd their notice ;
 Which must have fatal prov'd, amidst this outrage ?

Caled. 'Twas duskish, and a friendly porch conceal'd me,

During this dreadful scene of wild disorder.
 But is't not fit, that we relate these matters,
 Of such high import, to our monarch *Almorán* ?

Osmin. Most certain ; if 'tis safe, whilst thus his spirit

On all sides is inflam'd.

Caled. That task be mine.

From distant climes, by his command I hasten'd
 For the most weighty purpose now in hand ;
 That the high sceptre of the *Eastern* world,
 By birth, and by our laws his right of heritage,
 As such, may be possess'd by him alone.

Osmin. Indeed !—I like not this, it bodes me ill,

Short is the fav'rite's pow'r, when trust is shar'd.

(*Aside.*

In nought, my lord, the wisdom of a prince
 Shines more conspicuous, than in choice of council.
 Your known abilities and faithful service,
 Do honour to the public posts you fill,

By

By all confess'd, and make the state your debtor.

Caled. Would, noble vizier, that with suited courtesy

I could repay you, this your gen'rous compliment !
But truth of heart needs not the gloss of phrase ;
In a blunt soldier's language then, accept
My warmest thanks, although uncouth, sincere.

Osmin. The royal *Almorán* hath fix'd to-morrow
At noon, before the royal mosque, to claim
His just and single right to *Persia's* realms.
You have been summon'd to attend him thither ?

Caled. I have, and for the purpose have prepar'd,
A hardy band, devoted to his will.

Osmin. Diseases desp'rate, desp'rate aids require.
Our late dread sov'reign, in his languid moments,
Most foully was abus'd, else such bequest
Of a divided empire ne'er had happen'd.
How opportunely then, you've come to serve him !

Caled. Ne'er shall these eye-lids close, till it's accomplished. *(He goes off.)*

Osmin. This flattery might by some be deem'd
unworthy.

But this rough soldier, for his brutal valour,
Stands foremost in the favour of the tyrant.—
Much envied statesman ! What hast thou to boast
of ?

Condemn'd to be a slave ; the slave of slaves !
To smile on villains ; frown on humble merit ;
To mock deluded fools with airy promises ;
And live in one unvaried shameless course,
Of art, dissimulation, and deceit !

(Exit.)

S C E N E III.

ALMORAN and a Russian.

Almorán. Is it done ?

Russian.

Ruffian.

Dread sov'reign ! twas impossible.

Almorán. 'Twere better not essay'd then—What prevented ?*Ruffian.* Ere I could reach the door of his apartment,

I was secur'd——

Almorán.

And my design discover'd !

Ruffian. Fear not my faith. I should have been impal'dHad not my hidden poniard scap'd their search :
And even so, your signet only sav'd me.*Almorán.* Wou'd you had scap'd without it ! But again

You'll make the bold attempt ?

Ruffian.

Your zealous slave

Already is provided with the means.

Almorán. My bounty shall surpass your warmest hopes.*Ruffian.* Amidst the secrets of a learned Mage,
Whom in his close of life I had attended,
I found a powder of resistless virtue.*Almorán.* Thou trusty minister of fate !—proceed.*Ruffian.* 'Tis the soft down of an *Egyptian* flower;
So fine it almost mocks the sight ; and yet,
Such essence it contains of mortal quality,
That if awhile confin'd, it sudden strikes
With instant death, whom e'er the scent approaches,
Which, when expos'd to air it strait diffuses.*Almorán.* Most friendly drug ! and thou of friends
the first !But for your safety, with well-suited habit
Your semblance change, t' elude the keenest eye.*Ruffian.* With that too, is your slave already furnish'd.There's not a clime, nor varied mode of life,
For which the Mage's treasure is not stor'd,
With habits suitable ; besides, from childhood,
I have by use so to my will subdu'd
My lineaments and limbs, that in a moment

I can

I can my shape and visage so transform,
That my most intimate, the instant after,
My alter'd person could not recognize.

Almorán. My happy stars ordain'd thee for my purpose.

Haste, and succeed ! Time on his rapid wing,
Wafts fair occasion, and my keen revenge,
Impetuous as its flight, brooks no delay.
Keep still my signet for your last resource,
And see me soon.

Ruffian.

Sure as your slave survives.

(He goes off.)

Almorán. That must not be ; and so I have provided.

Soon as the deed is done, an arm as desperate,
Shall stop the breath, which may disclose this business,

Or awe me with its threats to base compliance.

(Exit,

S C E N E IV.

Before the Palace.

Enter OMAR, in the habit of a hermit.

Under this friendly guise, I have thus far
Scap'd even suspicion's eye ; yet, weary'd much,
I now approach the apartments of Lord Hamet.

(Hamet appears.)

And lo ! he moves this way ; tis opportune.

(He prostrate himself.)

May all the blessings of our holy prophet,
Ever await the ruler of the East !

Hamet. Rise, sage ! those hoary locks demand respect.

(Aside) He's something more than this mean garb bespeaks.

Omar. Though thus disguis'd, yet know you not,
(my prince !)

The

The voice, once so familiar to your ear ?

Hamet. Ha !—what art thou ? *Omar*?—impossible.—

Some phantom, some illusion of the sense !

Omar. No phantom, no illusion ; *Omar* lives.

Hamet. What miracle, what deity restor'd thee ?

Omar. The tyrant's poniard miss'd its deadly aim,
And did but slightly scar mine aged bosom :
But as my death alone would quell his fury,
I straightway fell, as if bereft of life :
And so was to the sepulchre consign'd.

Hamet. But how wert thou releas'd from the dark
chambers,

In which I saw thee clos'd ?

Omar.

A trusty slave,

That night, was by appointment to have freed me :

But, ere he came, a poor hard-fated wretch,

Who long had been (as I soon after learn'd)

The watchman of the place, thither repair'd,

Soon as the night had spread her sable curtain ;

Lur'd by the hopes, that he might booty make,

(As I o'erheard him mutter to himself)

Of some rich ornaments, with which my corse

Was, by your special mandate, then embellish'd,

As the last pious pledge of parting friendship.

Approaching, with a lanthorn in his hand ;

Soon as he op'd the tomb, I seiz'd his arm :

Quite scar'd, he su'd for mercy.—I besought him,

To lead me quickly to some friendly shelter ;

So gave him all the treasure that he sought.

With hands uprais'd, he blest me o'er and o'er ;

Then led me to his dwelling, which (he said)

Had been the cell of some sequester'd hermit,

Midst a thick wood, well-nigh conceal'd from sight.

There I remain'd in secret, till I learn'd

The horrid machinations form'd against you.

Hamet. Let me embrace thee, pious, best of men !
Guide of the faithful, guardian of my youth !

Omar. Thus favour'd then, may I presume to
ask,

Do

Do you, great prince, the son of mighty *Solyman*,
Mean (as 'tis said) to wed *Abdalla's* daughter?

Hamet. Wed her!—mean it!—I do, and glory in
the choice.

Omar. I see, my prince, you are subdu'd by
beauty.

Hamet. To say, in common phrase; that she is
beauteous,

Fair, as the blossom'd spring, or blushing morn,
Were far too poor, to speak of her perfection.

But that alone could ne'er have won my love.

'Twas but the friendly light that led my soul
To the rich treasures of her heavenly mind;
Her sense, her truth, her innocence, her virtue:
These are the charms, that have subdued thy *Ha-*
met;

Charms, that will last, when life's gay bloom is
gone;

When fancy fades, and passion is no more.

Hast thou not said?—"What though the pompous
glare

"Of titles, birth, or empire, awe the gazers,

"'Tis but the worth of soul that gives true dignity."

Omar. These my first precepts, still remain my
tenets;

Think not, I wish you to renounce a passion,
Which honour, truth, and wisdom, must approve!
No, my lov'd prince! My heart exults to see
Such goodness, and such greatness.

Hamet.

Yet, think not

Her origin obscure: the Lord *Abdalla*,

Noble himself, is of a race illustrious;

Once mighty monarchs of the Eastern world.

She wants not virtue then t' enhance that worth,

Which, were she lowly born, must fix my choice,

And give my diadem its brightest lustre.—

Shall I then tamely see this lawless ravisher

Invade my rights, and triumph in his spoils?

Or he, or I, must fall; my soul's resolv'd.

Omar.

Omar. Avert it, heav'n!—compose thyself my prince!

Th' all ruling pow'r will ne'er permit such wrongs.

Hamet. O! 'tis most easy, when the heart's untouch'd,

To give calm counsel, and to talk of patience.

But these are fruitless now—awhile my love,

Like some smooth stream in silence gently flow'd,

And stole in sweet meanders to my heart;

But now, oppos'd, it swells with boundless fury,

And like the torrent bears down all before it.

Omar. Great souls like thine, unmov'd bear fortune's strokes.

The timid only in the hour of trial,

Tremble, or shrink at the approaching danger.

“ When the rude monarch of the boist'rous winds

“ Confin'd in caverns keeps his ruffian guards ;

“ The scaly natives of the azure flood,

“ Upon its smooth and glassy surface glide :

“ But when he bursts his adamantine doors,

“ And the fierce tempest rages o'er the main,

“ In shoals the finny race th' abyss explore,

“ Or court the shelter of the friendly rocks ;

“ While undismay'd the huge Leviathan,

“ Tho' mountain rise on mountain threatening ruin,

“ Triumphant rides amidst the roar of seas.”

Hamet. Thou oracle of truth ! thy heav'nly counsel Gives balmy comfort to my drooping spirit :

“ As wou'd a vision, sent by special grace,

“ To some expiring wretch, perplex'd with doubts,

“ That should pronounce his paradise secur'd.”

So all is peace again.

Omar.

But say, my prince !

Have you yet caus'd the people to be founded ?

Their love imports you much.

Hamet.

I doubt them not.

Persians were once renown'd for noble souls,

Honest and brave ; though fiery, placable,

Zealous for right, then only apt to err,

When guile misled them in the shape of virtue.

And

And tho' the times have not their wonted health,
Numbers enow remain, by honour fir'd,
To stem the tide of vice, to save their country.
Hast thou yet heard of this fell tyrant's summons,
Which by an herald he hath dar'd to send me?

Omar. I heard it all, nor is it to be slighted.
Careless security oft' fatal proves.
To business then, my prince, it claims despatch.
Already, I've harangu'd and sooth'd the people.
(*They go off.*)

S C E N E V.

A Gallery in the Palace.

(*A great shout.*)

ALMORAN and CALED.

Almorán. Whence is this daring noise, at this night
hour?

Caled. Dread sir, as hither I in haste resorted,
I met the people in tumultuous outrage.
When, as they sped along, the name of *Omar*
Echo'd through all the regions of the air.

Almorán. Would they were all as he!

Caled. *Omar* still lives.

Almorán. 'Tis false, I stake my life—it cannot be.
With this good sword I fell'd the hoary traitor.

Caled. Not fate itself's more sure; these eyes be-
held him,

When unobserv'd, this even before the mosque,
I heard him rouse the people to sedition;
Who one and all cried out, "No king but *Hamet*."

Almorán. Some foul imposture this—confusion!
hell!

Haste, call my guards, let waste and slaughter loose.
Who mercy shews, him I pronounce a traitor.

Caled. A pow'rful band by largesses secur'd,
Train'd up to slaughter, and with death familiar,

In a fix'd quarter, wait my instant summons.
 These, in disguise, will mingle with the crowd;
 When, if a single voice shall dare oppose
 Your right, alone and uncontroul'd to sway
 The *Persian* realms, such vengeance will ensue,
 As future ages shall relate with horror.

Almorán. Away, and bear in mind, I seek no prisoners.

(*Caled goes off.*)

'Tis now the hour of rest, and gentle sleep,
 (That flies my pillow) wraps in sweet oblivion,
 The weary'd sense of all, whose souls are tranquil.
 Am I a king? yet shall I live thus wretched,
 Barr'd of those joys, for which I hourly languish?
 Shall I behold them, rifled by another?
 My rival too? what can the damn'd feel worse?
 Her image (as she bath'd) still haunts my thoughts!
 Curs'd force of beauty! that can thus subdue me!
 That thus in thralldom holds my captive soul,
 And tyrant like, despoils it of all power;
 Of ev'ry wish t' escape the pleasing snare.
 Ev'n reason loiters, lur'd by the enchantment,
 Until this haughty conqueror of hearts,
 Hath made its prize secure.

Enter OSMIN.

(*Almorán starts, and seizes his scymetar.*)

Who dares intrude?

Osmín. I come upon my mighty monarch's summons.

Almorán. Do you regard my peace, or prize my favour?

Osmín. Doubt first, that darkness will ensue the light;

Or that 'tis day, when the bright sun shines forth.

Almorán. True proof of service lies in deeds, not words.

Osmín. Speak but your will. That I may prove my zeal.

Imagination cannot form a danger,

That

That *Osmin* would not hazard for his prince.

Almorán. Then list. — I wish to rule alone. — You pause!

Osmin. It shall be so, the means are in my pow'r.

Almorán. Say how? — Be quick! — My soul's on fire to know.

Osmin. Griev'd, that this fatal instrument of mischief,

(The will of our late king, the mighty *Solyman*,
Which at his dying moments was extorted,)

Should spoil you thus of your inherent right;
I've stol'n it from the place, where 'twas secur'd.

Almorán. Ha! say'st thou so? — Where is it? —

Osmin. Dread sir, 'tis here.

(*Osmin produces the will. Almorán seizes it.*)

Almorán. Now is the crown mine only, spite of fortune.

Yet, vizier, more remains to be effected.

The fair *Circassian*! — O! by th' immortal *Mitbra*!

I must possess her, else farewell-all peace.

Osmin. So may it prove! and now a thought occurs.

Almorán. Pronounce it straight.

Osmin. Invention, aid me now.

(*Aside.*)

Was it not fix'd by our two mighty monarchs,

To meet to-morrow on the plains of *Ispahan*,

Soon as it dawn'd, to view this second host,

Now destin'd to be sent against the *Tartars*,

To crush them at a blow?

Almorán. It was. — What then?

Osmin. Hath this *Circassian* beauty ever seen you?

Almorán. I cannot say; but whither tend these questions?

Osmin. Let him alone attend; while you at home,
The more delicious joys of love pursue.

I have a garb prepar'd, he often wears;

When thus attir'd, and by the dawn assisted,

With the similitude that is betwixt you,

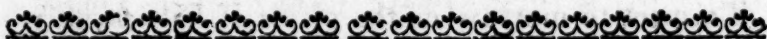
You'll quickly gain admittance to her chamber,

Where he so oft hath visited in secret.
 Then, if she takes you for your happy rival,
 In the surprize, you may (perhaps) persuade her,
 To grant an earnest of those wish'd for joys,
 So near at hand; if not, force must prevail.
 The prize is then your own.

Almorán. Transporting thought!
 Already fancy wings me to enjoyment.
 First of all beings! deity of light!
 Grant, that in this high enterprize I prosper,
 And at thy shrine I will for ever worship,
 Tho' musties rage, and prophets threat perdition!—
 But soft, the night wears fast; I must begone:
 Such enterprizes brook not cold delay.

(*He goes off.*)

Osmin. Dissimulation is ambition's hand-maid;
 And he that would ascend, must lowly act.
 The lofty pine, whose branches pierce the clouds,
 Its humble root first fixes in the earth:
 No deed so foul, ambition must not stoop to.
 'Things seem to forward well my future fortune;
 For whether she complies, or will not yield,
 It equally will serve; so let them work.—
 Low minds were form'd, as vassals to the world;
 'The world itself, for tow'ring souls like mine.



A C T IV.

S C E N E I.

A Gallery in the Palace.

Enter in haste ALMORAN and OSMIN meeting.

Almorán. H A V E you secur'd her?

Osmin. Whom my, dread lord?

Almorán. The proud *Circassian* maid.

Osmin.

Osmin. What means my prince?
I trust you have succeeded?

Almorán. Confusion! no——
Some dream disturb'd her, as I reach'd her couch,
That in wild murmur'ing accents in her sleep,
She call'd for aid on *Hamet* and her prophet.
I gently took her hand from her fair bosom,
Whereat she wak'd, with such soul-piercing shrieks,
That all who slept contiguous to her chamber,
With speed rush'd in, at head of them her father:
But him I straight despatch'd.

Osmin. What hindered them?

Almorán. Frantic she cast her on his ghastly corse;
She scream'd, she tore her hair, she smote her bosom.
With horror struck, I stood awhile quite tranc'd;
'Then quickly shrunk from view: mean time she fled.
Away! secure her as you prize your safety.—
Yet hold! stay on thy life——of these delays
Advantage may be taken, by this brother,
This pageant king, this mockery of state.

Osmin. Besides, he much hath won the people's
love.

Almorán. Delusion all!——They in their hearts
contemn
His abject spirit, that can basely cringe,
And court the slaves, who at his nod should tremble;
Whose spurious courage, and whose bold demeanour,
Spring only from the fears of dastard rulers:
The tim'rous hand ne'er tam'd the fiery steed;
'Tis to the brave alone, he deigns to yield.

Osmin. And yet, great prince, whilst thus divisions
rage,
Wou'd you succeed, 'tis meet, that feign'd compliance
Take place of chastisement and harsh rebuke.
There is in ev'ry state a sort of spirits,
For ever restless, foes to peace and order;
Themselves most vicious; slaves to ev'ry faction,
Making their private views, with specious shew
Of public virtue, liberty and love.

These with the pomp of phrase, meer empty sounds,

Allure the simple, and inflame the rabble;
 Then lead them as they list—such instruments,
 In times like these are oft of wondrous moment,
 And must be won to serve; and then, dread sir!
 Such arts have been much practis'd by your rival.

Almorán. Accursed fate! to what am I debas'd?
 To turn mean suitor to these abject vassals;
 And be a fawning king? a splendid slave?
 I know them well—light as the gossamer,
 Sport of each blast, and as the blast inconstant:
 Restless alike, in good or evil fortune,
 Just as their selfish leaders drive them on.
 What man can say, he holds their love a moment?
 To day ador'd, to-morrow held in scorn,
 Both with the same blind zeal—yet, venal slaves!
 There is not one, but may be bought for gold:
 Perpetual strife is their supreme delight;
 And when they find no foreign cause for contest,
 They turn the love of quarrel on their country.—
 Howe'er, give orders to convene the nobles,
 Straightway to meet me at the royal mosque;
 Where I'll demand that right, of which I'm spoil'd.

(Osmin goes off.)

There's nought t' oppose me now: the *will's* no more.
 And then, 'tis like, 'ere this, mine hated rival
 Of diadem and beauty sleeps regardless.
 O! by th' all-pow'rful deity I worship!
 Should fortune mock me there, this shall not fail.

(Putting his hand to his sword.)

(Goes off.)

SCENE

S C E N E II.

A Forest at a small Distance from the City of
Ispahan.

HAMET, MIRVAN, and others.

A Tempest.

Hamet. Was ever such a morn of terrors seen?
What rage of warring winds! what bursts of thunder!
With such tremendous sheets of flashing fire,
That nature shudder'd at th' approaching ruin.

Mirvan. O sir! all fear'd, all trembled, for your
safety.

Hamet. But for the shelter of a friendly oak,
Whose sturdy trunk for centuries had brav'd
Heav'n's flaming bolt, and rough encount'ring blast;
I must have perish'd, in the hideous conflict.
I fear the forces, that were fix'd to meet us
On the adjacent plain, have suffer'd much.

Mirvan. Such as escap'd the light'nings baneful
blast,
(For many fell) have sought the thicket's shelter.

Enter ZAMA.

Zama. Our holy prophet guard the East's great
ruler!
But now, as to the limits of this forest,
Anxious I hasted, fearful for your safety,
Amidst this dire convulsion of the elements,
I saw a wand'ring fair with an attendant,
Not distant far, in seeming sore distress.

Hamet. 'Tis strange! — what fate could mix her
with these terrors? —
Let's seek her out: perhaps we yet may save her.
Heav'n form'd the brave its champions for the fair.

(*They go off.*)

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

Scene changes, and ALMEYDA is discovered with an Attendant supporting her.

Attendant. No longer can my tir'd, though willing,
arm

Support her weight, let's rest beneath this rock.
This wood, though near the confines of the palace,
May yield us safe retreat: the trees stand thick,
Its paths all darksome, and perplex'd; besides,
Our fell pursuers, midst this train of horrors,
Appall'd have lost their way.

Almeyda. Mercy, good heav'n!
I shiver—oh! I'm cold—cold—cold to death.

Attendant. Alas! she faints, and no help nigh us
here.

(A cave open, and an OLD MAN comes forth.)

Old-man. Methought, I heard the voice of deep
distress.

Say, what art thou? and who this helpless fair,
To all this rage of tempest, thus expos'd?

Attendant. O! help to raise her from this fearful
trance!

(The Old man approaches near to Almeyda.)

Old-man. I have a medicine compos'd of simples,—
Whose friendly virtues I have oft experienc'd:
I will essay it here: *(he administers it)* again she
breathes;

And to her death-pale cheek the rose returns;
As loth so sweet a mansion to forsake.

Enter HAMET, ZAMA, MIRVAN, and Attendants.

Zama. This is the party that I just now met.

Hamet. Am I awake? or are these midnight
visions?

By

By the eternal pow'r! it is my love!—

What could have brought her to this state of misery;
Expos'd to this fierce conflict of the heavens?

Almeyda. Where am I? Are not you a man?—
stand off.—

See—see!—my father—spectacle of horror?—

There,—there,—on yon cold turf;—pale,—bloody
corse!

O *Hamet*! *Hamet*! had I been the victim,

Then had I blest'd thee with my parting breath.

Hamet. Father?—blood?—*Hamet*?—victim?—
Most wonderful!—

Omar. O! try, sweet lady, to compose your spi-
rits!

Ill can that tender frame support these tumults.

Almeyda. Who cou'd suspect his tender, ardent
vows?

Or that such heav'nly form conceal'd deceit?

Dart, dart your bolts, ye thunders, at my head!

'Tis death alone, can rid me of my woes.

Hamet. What fraud is this? What hell con-
certed scheme?

By sacred truth! by our chaste, mutual loves!

Not nature's self is to her course more true,

Than I to thee, thou dear celestial maid!

O speak!—Those eyes, that glare upon me thus,

Yet see me not, nor with thy soul hold sympathy.—

It is thy *Hamet* sues.

Almeyda. Why—let him come!—

He will not kill me:—that would be too kind.—

Rage, tempest! rage!—thou'rt not so fierce as
man.—

Take, take my life!—But spare, O! spare the
chastity

Of a poor orphan, destitute of succour!

Hamet. Is there none here, that can unfold this
mystery?

Attendant. Wou'd she were favour'd with some
place of safety!

Where, when the tempest of her soul is calm'd,

We may unfold her tale of grievous sorrow.

Old-man.

Old-man. Within this cell, she may securely rest,
A faithful, old companion of my days,
Who now seeks water, at a neighbouring fountain,
At her return shall minister all succour,
Our humble lodge, and scanty means can furnish.

Hamet. Alas! she sinks again!—Help! ~~hear~~
her in!

(*They go into the cave.*)

S C E N E IV.

The Palace.

ALMORAN, OSMIN, and CALED.

Almoran. What, yet no news of this pretender's fate?

Caled. None yet have reach'd us, but he can't
escape;

Ev'n of his guards, some have been won to serve
you;

Nor is there one, who, for the price now offer'd,
Would not betray the prophet they adore.

(*A sound of trumpets.*)

Almoran. This speaks some tidings.

Enter an OFFICER, who falls prostrate.

Officer. Great king of kings!

Almoran. Rise, slave! And when your fear-struck
heart permits,

Pronounce the news you bring! There is no misery
In fate's black stores, that look doth not presage.

Officer. Under the shelter of a dusky mist,
At dawn of morn, the *Tartars* stole upon us.
What though your troops had, all the night before,
To guard against surprize, untented watch'd;
Their van, a body of gigantic size,
With iron maces arm'd, whose fatal stroke,
Nor temper'd helm, nor buckler could resist:
These, wildly rushing on with hideous shouts,

Amaze

Amaze and terror spread through every rank,
And rout awhile ensued.

Almorau. Ha! Cowards—rebels!—
I am betray'd—ill-omen'd slave! what further?

Officer. But for the brave *Axares*, who repress'd
The hot pursuit, and stay'd the victor foe,
They had been at our gates.

Almorau. Peace, dastard! peace!
This arm, with half your numbers, thrice hath
chas'd
This savage rabble, to their dreary wilds.

Enter another OFFICER.

2d Officer. Pardon your slave! as, from the camp
I hasted,
I met our late king *Hamet* on full speed,
Regardless of the tempest's wrathful wreck.
Nor far behind a body of your troops,
Headed by two of *Persia's* chief commanders,
Mirvan and *Zama*, of his firmest friends,
To join *Axares* the *Armenian* prince.

Almorau. All, all retire awhile; I choose some
privacy—

Yet wait within a call; the time is short.

(*They go off.*)

Curs'd stars!—damnation! whither fled my senses,
That this *Armenian* dog should now exist?
That one so link'd to my detested rival,
Should at this day be leader of our armies?
Yet some few hours may give him to my vengeance.—
This brother too.—Then, may I scorn the *Tartar*—
Should there be in my breast a single spark
Of love or pity left, I henceforth banish it,
As foreign from the safety of a crown,
And fear alone my future rule shall stablish.

(*He goes off.*)

SCENE

S C E N E V.

A plain near a forest, in view of the city, where appear HAMET and OMAR, the Lords MIRVAN, ZAMA, and others, at a small distance.

Hamet. What led you to this place of deep concealment?

Omar. It is the same, whither I was conducted, The night I was releas'd from my interment ; And where oft' since in safety I have rested.

Hamet. Shews she no glimmering of returning reason?

Omar. O! no, all's darkness still and wild despair ; Nor does the slave, that led her to this covert, Less strangely talk than his distressed charge.

Hamet. And shall I leave her now, (distracting thought !)

Midst all this mazy labyrinth of woe?

Omar. The public safety, thine and her's demand it,

Some moments must decide the fate of all.

Hamet. But oh! what torment can exceed that interval?

Didst thou but know her worth, and how I love, Then would'st thou wonder, if I kept my reason. But this will too much grieve thy tender nature.

Omar. Despair not, prince! Yet may th' auspicious pow'r, That shields the guiltless, and delights in virtue, Restore *Almeyda* to her faithful *Hamet*.

The ills, that have befall'n, let's strive to heal : What yet with threat'ning aspect low'r upon us, Forewarn'd, we may with heav'n's kind aid prevent.

Hamet. Then, for awhile, I'll tear me from this mourner,

And

And, to thy friendly care and heav'n consign her.—
Now, fate, dispose of *Hamet* as thou wilt.

(*He moves towards his attendants.*)

At length, my lords, the tempest's rage hath ceas'd,
And the heav'ns cheer us, with a milder aspect.

Was not our brother to have met the forces,
Here on this plain, that are to join the camp?

Zama. Perhaps he shunn'd the terrors of the
morn.

A MESSENGER in haste.

Messenger. Fly, fly, good prince, your life hangs
on a moment.

Within this little space, our monarch *Almorán*,
Taking advantage of your early absence,
Conven'd the priests, the nobles, and the people,
Before the royal mosque; where he pronounc'd
Your claim to half of *Persia's* throne a forgery.
In vain the people strove t' assert your right:
A chosen band of hireling ruthless ruffians,
With keen-edg'd falchions cut their bloody way;
And strew'd the pavements with our slaughter'd ci-
tizens.

An herald then aloud proclaim'd you, traitor:
And for your head whole provinces are offer'd.

Hamet. I fear not aught, while *Persia's* troops
stand firm.

Messenger. O! trust them not, for bribes have
reach'd all ranks,

But these dispatches will inform you further.

(*He delivers a letter to the king, which he reads.*)

" Most puissant prince!

" This morning, just as it dawn'd, Lord *Almorán*
" disguised in one of your habits, by some foul
" stratagem, got admittance to the fair *Almeyda's*
" apartment."

Almeyda's!—ha!—and in my dress disguis'd!—

(*Reads on.*)

E

" Not

“ Not succeeding in the attempt he made upon her
 “ virtue, he would have forc’d her, had not her
 “ father lord *Abdalla*, rous’d by her shrieks, rush’d
 “ into her chamber. The tyrant straightway slew
 “ him, but she, amidst the confusion most happily
 “ escaped, and has not since been heard of.”——

Almeyda, much abus’d !——perhaps undone !
 Her father slain !——and all she thinks by me !
 Where is the messenger ?

Mirvan. He scarcely staid to breathe.

Hamet. *Almeyda* lost—and with her ev’ry joy !——
 Burst ! burst, my brain !——come, dear distraction !
 come !

Let us away ! let’s range the spacious globe !
 Let’s to the forests ! to the stony desert !
 To barren sands ! and everlasting snows !
 Not the grim leopard, nor the bristly boar,
 The fierce hyæna, or the rav’nous tyger,
 Equal in savage wildness, this despoiler.
 There, there, she flies.—See ! *Almorán* pursues her,
 Through the rude brake, all o’er besmear’d with
 blood.——

Zama. O ! may your slave beseech you to have
 patience.

Hamet. Who talks of patience ? preach it to the
 tempest.——

He has her now.—Now, now, he seizes her.——
 To me she cries.—This, tyrant, to thy heart !——
 (*He totters a while and falls.*)

Zama. Alas ! he’s fall’n.——

Mirvan. Help ! my lord, to raise him.
 (*They raise him up.*)

Zama. How he trembles !

Mirvan. The frenzy, which hath wrought
 His tortur’d heart, will quickly waste itself,
 And all be calm again.

(*Hamet gives a great sigh.*)

Zama.

His soul returns.

Hamet.

Hamet. Where have I been ?—a trembling shakes
my frame ;

Cold damps bedew me o'er, and I'm all languid.—
My lords, I blush at this unmanly weakness,
When ev'ry motive urges me to action.
Shall I not fly this instant to the palace ;
And with a thousand gaspes mark the monster ?

Mirvan. Each pass is guarded, but mean while
the *Tartar*

May reach our gates, whither he bends his way.

Hamet. Not the fond turtle, that beholds its mate
By the fierce falcon o'er the plain pursu'd,
In horror lost, unable to assist,
E'er felt such pangs, as wring this tortur'd heart.

Zama. Some scouts report that the *Armenian* prince
Is posted near this plain, within a forest,
Which you, dread prince, with hurried speed may
reach.

Without delay, we shall collect the forces,
The storm dispers'd, and lead them to your banners.

Hamet. Now, by the sacred ashes of our sire,
Th' immortal *Solyman* ! ere the next sun,
One throne, one earth shall not contain us both.

(*They go off different ways.*)

S C E N E VI.

A Forest.

An Old Man from a cave.

Old man. That they can here remain conceal'd.—
Impossible :

If they're discover'd, death's my certain portion.
'Tis true, this holy man, hath been most bounteous ;
But avarice encreases with possessing ;
And large rewards are offer'd to secure them.—
Then, they're my guests, and here in sacred trust :
And faith and truth plead strongly in their favour ;
And yet our *Solyman*, so just esteem'd,
Whole countries ravag'd from that cause alone,
(None other I have heard) he wish'd for them.

E 2

Yea,

Yea, ev'n the sceptre, he so greatly sway'd,
 Was by his fire from its possessor ravish'd.
 From prince to peasant, then, 'tis plunder all.
 Besides, 'tis said they're traitors to the state;
 If so, 'twere 'gainst my duty to conceal them.
 " In youth and age I've been twice twenty years,
 " The wretched guardian of yon gloomy mansions;
 " Where pride lies low, and all distinction rests:
 " And now it seems, as if my friendly stars,
 " This booty offer'd, that mine eve of life.
 " May with some comfort close.——So speed me,
 " fortune!"

(He goes off)

SCENE VII.

A Field near a large Plain, where the *Persian Army*
 is encamped.

*AXARES, the Armenian Prince, is discovered, lying on
 the Earth.*

Axares. Am I awake? and is that heav'n's great
 light,

That flames thus crimson o'er yon eastern hill?
 All nature seems refresh'd with sweet repose;
 But I, to whose tir'd sense and love sick heart,
 Nor cheerful day, nor care composing night,
 Can bring relief.—O wretched heart! sad seat
 Of constant sorrow!—wou'd I were at peace!
 Sure stern misfortune hath not in its quiver
 A shaft of keener woe than hopeless love!

HAMET appears.

Hamet. This way, methought the voice of mourn-
 ing came;
 My friend!——'tis as I fear'd.—Ah! my *Axares*!
 Howe'er thou may'st assume the placid mien,

To

To hide the grief, that rankles in thine heart,
It breaks through all disguise.

Axares.

Alas! my prince!

Who that has feelings, can unmov'd behold
The bloody carnage of the late fought field,
With all the waste, that fell ambition makes?

Hamet. But is there not beside some bosom grief,
Which, canker like, preys on thy youthful bloom,
And pales thy cheek?—I am myself a man,
O'erwhelm'd with sorrow, and, were it a time,
Could such a train of bitter woes relate
Which have befall'n me since we parted last,
That thou would'st wonder, I now live to tell them.

Axares. I've heard, I feel them all; but they may
terminate,
And with sure bliss and triumph crown your suff'rings.
Mine ne'er can end.—Wherefore, O! covet not,
To win that secret, which till on life's verge,
I must conceal, but soon that hour will come.

(*Flourish of trumpets.*)

Hamet. Hark! the soul firing trumpet rings to
arms.

Axares. It wakes the morning watch, the hour ap-
proaches,
Th' important hour, that must decide the fate
Of you, my prince, and *Asia's* mighty empire.
There was a time, when *Persia's* warlike sons
Shone foremost in the lists of fame and glory:
Grant heav'n! they now retrieve their late lost honour.

Hamet. None once stood more renown'd for feats of
valour.

But with great *Solyman* all virtue fled;
And in its stead, came luxury and vice,
With all the fell attendants of their train;
Feeble effeminacy, foul corruption,
Unmanly pleasures, cowardice of heart.

Axares. What, though awhile the active spirit
slumbers,
Yet, when the heav'n born spark, which now lies
buried,
Shall at the flame of virtue be rekindled;

Then will it blaze up with redoubled lustre.

Axares. As, now, at sight of their inspiring *Hamet*,
The drooping spirits of your troops revive,
And all wait earnest, for the approaching combat.

Hamet. Wou'd they were prov'd! this sudden fire
may languish.

Axares. Propitious heav'n seems to your wish indulgent.

Along yon hill, far as mine eyes can reach,
I mark a cloud, the dust of many feet.

'Tis sure the *Tartar* foe: they mean surprize.

Hamet. Shall we advance, and charge them on
their march?

Axares. Our troops are ready form'd upon the
plain.

Suppose we wait them there? the space is large.

Hamet. Their distance yet, may yield some pause
for counsel.

So let's away—my breast with ardour glows;
And ev'ry nerve, with double strength seems brac'd.
O, thou Supreme! who rul'st the fate of empires!
Grant meet success may crown our just designs!
Our country rescue from these fell barbarians;
And on this tyrant king avenge the world!

(They go off.)

ACT



A C T V.

S C E N E I.

A Council of War in a Pavilion, on a Plain,
where the *Persian* Army are encamped.

HAMET, AXARES, MIRVAN, ZAMA, and others.

Hamet. **T**HIS sudden halt, from their so rapid
march,

Beyond the wood, bespeaks some deep design.

Axares To lure us, ('tis most like) to break the
order,

In which we here most firmly stand embattled.

Mirvan. Or else, to pass between us and the city,
Now in their view.

Zama. Such an attempt were fruitless ;
Two only ways lead thither from the wood,
And each meet on this plain.

Hamet. *(A clarion sounds.)*
Some tidings this.

Enter in haste an OFFICER and Soldiers.

Officer. Dread prince! but now, as on my watch
I mov'd,

I heard a voice from a contiguous copse
Muttering (midst others) these alarming sounds.

Hamet—letter—poison—rushing towards it ;

I spy'd a stranger in a foreign garb ;
And in his hand a paper, which, confus'd,
He hastily unclos'd, and viewing tore,
Casting the broken fragments to the wind.

Straight,

Straight, his whole frame was fearfully convuls'd ;
 And all that we could learn ere he expir'd,
 Was, that *his fate* was for *our prince* intended.
 But afterwards, on searching him we found
 This royal signet of our dread king *Almorán*.

Hamet. That looks not well.

Axaris. Yet somewhat fortunate,
 As it betrays designs of deadly mischief,
 And may portend some further boon from heaven.

Enter another OFFICER.

Officer. Some scouts report the *Tartars* seem in motion.

Hamet. Each to his post—we'll wait them on the plain.

(*They go off.*)

S C E N E II.

The Palace.

ALMORAN and OSMIN.

(*A shout is heard.*)

Almorán. Wherefore this shout ?

Osmín. It seems the voice of triumph.

Enter CALED, and falls prostrate.

Almorán. Your haste speaks eager zeal—your tidings ?—rise.

Caled. Omar, great prince ! with the *Circassian* fair—

Almorán. Are taken.—Thanks, thou mighty source of light !

You also !—O the transport ! but how—where ?

Caled. Deep in the bosom of a neighbouring wood,
 Descends a cave, with ivy mantled o'er ;

There

There lay this beauty, and might still have rested
From ev'ry eye conceal'd, but those alone,
(And they but few,) to her retirement privy,
Had not her host for the rich bribe betray'd her.
With her I found, that old seditious priest,
Omar, the minion of the brainless rabble ;
In the same hermit's guise, in which (before)
He dar'd proclaim against your sacred rights.

Almorán. These services surpass all means of
gratitude,

And leave your prince a beggar in your debt.
But how have you dispos'd of these rich prizes ?

Caled. The hoary priest without attends your summons.

Almorán. With *Almeyda* ?——

Caled. Too weak to keep our pace,
She's left in trusty hands upon the way.

Almorán. Then, nothing's done ; without her all
is vain.

Caled. Had you beheld her, you'd pronounce me
blameless.

In speechless trance, the lovely mourner sat,
Pale as a lilly, from whose tender leaf,
Remorseless show'rs had swept its snowy down,
And seem'd regardless of all future fortune.

Almorán. Talk not of pity, 'tis the voice of fools.

And suits not enterprize. Let her be lodg'd
In some retir'd apartment of the palace.

Thither, I will on love's swift wings repair,

And on the luscious banquet feast for ever.

Meanwhile, away, produce the rebel priest.

(*Caled withdraws, and returns with Omar and guards.*)

Why throbs my heart thus, at a slave's approach ?

(*Aside.*)

What hast thou now to hope, seditious wretch !

Omar. What hast thou not to fear, mistaken
prince ?

Almorán. Presumptuous vassal ! weak, as arrogant.
Where is the pow'r that *Almorán* can fear ?

Omar.

Omar. Thine own, vain man, to thee of all most dangerous.

Almorán. Haste—bring the rack—Infernal powers, assist!

Invent new tortures for this hoary caitiff!

Omar. Though whelm'd in wretchedness, secure in virtue,

I dare defy the monarch of the East.

Thou may'st this aged flesh with pincers tear,
But there is that within thou can'st not reach,
Which dares despise thee, even upon the rack.

Almorán. Dost thou not wish to die?

Omar. That would betray

The dastard soul, that dreads to meet ill fortune.

Yet, who would wish to live, and living see,
Monsters like thee, heav'n's substitutes on earth?

Almorán. Thanks for the thought! I will enjoy it fully,

And thou shall live; and thou shall see my triumph,

And shalt thy boasted fortitude indulge,

Ev'n on the rack to which thou hadst defy'd me.

Yet, shall that wretched carcase be preserv'd,

Whilst by a single spark of life 'tis warm'd,

To be a jest and mockery at revels,

Till rack'd with envy, thou shalt beg to die.

Omar. I cannot envy what I must despise;

So, use your savage will as suits it best.

Yet hear, proud monarch! tremble at this sentence.

That pow'r supreme, whose laws thou dar'st prophane,

Albeit his vengeance stands a while suspended,

Ere long will crush thee with a sudden ruin.

Almorán. Mutes—slaves.—Away with him.—Ye know my will.

(*They bear him off.*)

Almorán. (*To Caled.*) Away—despatch the necessary orders;

(*Aside.*) That done, attend me in the audience chamber;

Some

Some matters of high import claim your counsel.

(*All go off but Osmin.*)

Osmin. A private conf'rence in the audience chamber.—

'Twas surely so, or much my ear deceiv'd me.

This cannot bode me well. Behind the arras,

I may in safety learn his black designs. —

I'll haste before them to the place appointed. —

I doubt, my secret plots and correspondence,

By some cross accident, have been disclos'd.

Is then my downfal doom'd ? are all my glories,

And all the golden prospects I had cherish'd,

In one short moment blasted ? fearful thought !

Now, friends like shadows, with the light will vanish,

And ev'ry tongue be ready to accuse ;

All benefits forgot, each fault remember'd ;

Nor will invention's baneful aid be wanting,

To blacken and defame ?—Some desperate cast

Alone can save.—Kind fortune, be my guide !

(*He goes off.*)

S C E N E III.

Near the Field of Battle.

MIRVAN and other OFFICERS.

Mirvan. Here halt ; and guard this pass ; it is of moment.

Confusion hath already seiz'd the foe,

And rout as quick will follow. Saw you our king ?

Officer. I did. He's every where, and gives his orders

Calm and compos'd amidst a thousand deaths.

Enter HAMET and several Persian OFFICERS.

Hamet. Stop the pursuit ! only a part hath fled :

This may be stratagem ; their centre stands.

But

But this way, hastes a party of our troops.

Enter ZAMA, OFFICERS, &c.

Zama. Hail, *Asia's* glorious prince ! the day is your's.
Whilst the fierce *Tartar* chieftain, (*Oſar*) fought,
Slaughter mov'd with him, and th' event hung doubtful.

But the *Armenian* prince, the brave *Axares*,
Midst the thick carnage sought the savage hero ;
When meeting arm to arm, in combat fierce,
All gor'd with wounds, they both together fell.
The *Tartar* straight expir'd : the prince yet lives
Pouring incessant blessings on his *Hamet*.

Hamet. O dear bought victory ! Conduct me to
him. (*They go off*)

S C E N E IV.

A Part of the Field of Battle, where *Axares* is supported ; *Hamet*, *Zama* and others appear and approach him.

Hamet. O prince ! O my *Axares* ! O my friend !
Wherefore ? O wherefore ! was that fatal rashness.
That needness plung'd, where fiercest slaughter rag'd,
And courted danger, valour might have shunn'd ?

Axares. At length, thank heav'n ! my day of life
is o'er,

And sorrow long conceal'd, hath reach'd its limit.
'Tis what I much have wish'd, 'tis what I fought.
But oh ! permit me to implore your pardon,
Whilst I the source of all my woes reveal,
That secret grief, that prey'd on your *Axares*.——
Know then, I lov'd——but lov'd, alas ! in vain.

Hamet. Our world, holds not a maid, how rich
foe'er

In wealth or titles, who were not exalted,
If lov'd by thee, the pride of *Asia's* youths.

Axares. Thanks with my latest breath.——O
patience then !

I lov'd

I lov'd—I lov'd *Almeyda*.

Hamet.

Ha! *Almeyda*.

Axares. O! stay your censure, 'till I tell you all,
I journey'd with her from *Circassia*'s court,
Whither I had on embassy been sent,
Shortly before your royal father slept.
Her matchless form, her soul-enchanting converse
Soon made a captive of my ravish'd soul,
Then, quite unconscious of your early loves.
With flatt'ring hopes, I let the fond delusion
Convey me from myself, far, far to sea,
Ere I perceiv'd the shore had been forsaken.
But how I've struggled since to wean my heart,
And to regain its freedom, witness heaven!
I courted pleasures, then I sought retirement,
Then, plung'd amidst the foremost ranks of war,
But all rebell'd against me; all conspir'd,
To plunge me deeper, and compleat my ruin.

Hamet. Ill-fated youth!—Wou'd heav'n this had
not been!

Axares. O! grieve not more at my disastrous fortune.

Soon to those blest abodes, I shall be wafted,
Where love no more in fruitless sighs shall mourn;
Nor pine for joys, it cannot hope to reach.
Delay not then, but hasten to the city;
The tyrant hath not one, t' espouse his cause,
Save those, whom fear, or bribe, not love, hath won.]
My spirits sink apace; and darkness gathers.
May all the pow'rs that in chaste love delight,
With never-fading transports, bless you both,
You—you—most happy prince, and your *Almeyda*!
Farewel! O think no more of me!—Farewel!

(Dies.)

Hamet. O! first in honour, friendship, truth and
valour.—

O! lost for ever to this mournful heart—
Like some fair plant, by the rude blast o'erturn'd,
In its new bloom, he lies a beauteous ruin.

F

Enter

Enter an OFFICER.

Officer. Most puissant prince ! such of the *Tartar* troops,
As 'scap'd the slaughter of th' ensanguin'd field,
Are all furrounded at a narrow pass,
And claim your royal clemency.

Hamet. We grant it,
Yet, only as it suits the public safety ;
But 'twou'd be dang'rous now to set them free.
Next, for this conqueror, this noble youth,
A grateful tomb of monumental brass,
Shall tell posterity his matchless fame,
And all the heart-felt sorrows of his friend.
(They go off.)

S C E N E V.

An Antichamber in the Palace.

OSMIN.

'This is th' appointed place, whither I've come,
Like some night-watching thief, on rapine bent,
Appall'd at ev'ry breeze, each stirring leaf.
O guilt ! thy wages shou'd be passing great,
'To recompense the terrors that await thee.
But wherefore this ? 'Tis now too late for scruples.
Ambition's on the wing, and must not pause :
'Tis the event alone gives fame, or infamy ;
If we miscarry, down we sink inglorious ;
But if by fortune favour'd, then are heroes.——
I hear the tread of feet : I'll take my stand.
(He retires behind the arras.)

Enter

Enter ALMORAN.

Almorán. Again I'm baffled.—Sure, 'tis incantation!

Nor prayers, nor threats could move, she scorn'd them all.

Yet, by the sun! although beyond all suff'rance,

Her virgin purity so aw'd my soul,

And to such wild excess my passion drove me,

I could have cast my sceptre at her feet;

Have vow'd myself her doting slave for ever.

And then, some wayward fortune brought our sister

Amidst this parley screaming to the chamber,

Where this proud fair was lodg'd by my appointment.

Yet must she yield —(*Sound of trumpets.*) But hark! some new alarm!

Enter an OFFICER.

Officer. All adoration to the East's great monarch!
The *Tartars* are dispers'd; their leader slain.

Almorán. Of *Hamet* what?—Speak, or I'll strike thee dead.

Enter another OFFICER.

2d. Officer. Dread king! a pow'rful party of your forces,

With conquest flush'd, and headed by lord *Hamet*,

Speed hither, and proclaim him on their march,

Sole monarch of your realms.

Almorán.

Be dumb for ever!

Shut all the gates,—cover the walls with troops,—

Rouse all the citizens—away—yet hold.—

This rival brother, still hath been their minion.

(*Aside.*)

My horse—I'll head my guards—yet hold again—

That must not be—to stake a crown possess'd,

Against a rash and casual cast were madness.

Curs'd fate! on what? on whom can I rely?—

Doubts rise on doubts—confusion meets confusion.

1st. Officer. Threefold his force, my liege, of
Persia's troops,

Won to your cause, and led by valiant *Caled*,

Sped to oppose him on his progress hither.

Almorán. As I could wish.—Where's the *Armenian*
prince?

Officer. He fell in single combat with the *Tartar*.

Almorán. (*Aside.*) I now despise this shallow, rash
adventurer:

Then treasure hath been lavish'd 'mongst his followers.
Away, and let me know each moment's fortune.

(*Officer goes off.*)

(*Flourish of trumpets.*)

This, by the light! is triumph.—If my rival's,

(*Draws his sword.*)

This shall not miss his heart: too long I've trifled.

Enter CALED.

Caled. First and sole monarch of the East, live
ever!

The rebel party, which lord *Hamet* headed,

Fled at th' approach of your undaunted troops.

In the pursuit, it was my chance to seize him,

And now in chains, he waits your final sentence.

Almorán. Had thy keen poniard done me quicker
justice,

My thanks had been entire: yet much is due.

Be this my birth day! I ne'er liv'd before.

Give orders, that our vizier be secur'd;

There is no safety, whilst that traitor lives.

Ev'n since the morning, some of his despatches,

Of

Of dang'rous import to our crown and safety,
Not only to my rival, but the *Tartar*,
Were seiz'd upon the way, and hither brought.
As thou'rt a man, in whom I can confide,
This signet take and tablets, there you'll find
The names of those, my will to death hath doom'd,
Of whom, *Osmin* the first. See it be done.

(*Caled goes off.*)

(*Great flourish of trumpets.*)

Enter HAMET in chains, officers and guards.

(*Apart to an attendant.*) Haste to th' adjacent
chamber, hither bring
The captive maid!—now shall I, spite of fortune,
Sate with revenge and love my thirsting soul.

Hamet. Dispatch me straight, if thou would'st rid
thy soul
Of all the terrors my existence give thee.

Almeran. That wou'd not fill the measure of my
vengeance.

No, I'll first wring thy heart, 'till thou dost curse
The hour that gave thee being, and thy prophet;
Then will I hurl thee to eternal misery.

Hamet. Vain wretch! thou vauntest far beyond
thy pow'r,
Wert thou now arm'd with ev'ry fiercest torment,
Wherewith the fiends amidst the burning lake,
With never-ceasing rage pursue the damn'd,
Thou could'st not awe the soul that knows no fear,
Save to transgress the righteous will of heaven.

Enter an OFFICER, with ALMEYDA and women attendants.

O! by our holy prophet! my *Almeyda*—
What, what are whips to this? pincers, or sulphur?
What

What all the tortures hell has in its stores?

Almeyda. Insupportable !

(*She faints.*)

Hamet.

See ! she sinks—she falls.—

My presence strikes her dead.—Indulge me, sirs ;

I am in chains, and cannot shun my doom.

(*He approaches her.*)

O ! for one moment's life ! that ere we part,

For ever part, my injur'd love may know,

That her most faithful *Hamet* never wrong'd her.

Almorán. Shall I bear this ? Mutes, drag him to his fate.

Not all the pow'rs of darkness, nor of light,

Shall rob me now of this delicious prize.

Hamet. Forbear a while, and double then your vengeance.

She moves—she wakes—she lives—all bounteous heaven !

Alas ! how grief hath worn her ?—Oh ! this meeting,

Is life—is death—is rapture—is despair !

Almeyda. Where is he now ? it was the prince—
'twas *Hamet*.

Hamet. It is thy *Hamet*.—Guardian angels, shield her !

Almeyda. That e'er his soul could harbour such a thought !—

That e'er such Godlike semblance veil'd deceit !—

That e'er he should attempt !—Alas ! my heart

Wou'd fain persuade itself amidst its sufferings,

That he's still innocent—and must he bleed !

(*She turns to Almorán, and falls on her knees.*)

If yet thou think'st there is not blood enough,

And thy insatiate soul still thirsts for more,

On me—on me alone, exhaust its rage.

He cannot, must not, shall not die for me.

Almorán. The fault is your's.

Almeyda. Tell—tell it.—Say the ransom ?

Almorán.

Almorán. For ever, from this hour, renounce your loves,
And yield, fair mourner, to my fond embrace ;
Thou then, of all the beauties that give lustre
To our seraglio's paradise of joys,
Where pleasures revel in eternal round,
Shalt sov'reign empress reign, by all ador'd.
(*Aside.*) To kill him then, will give my soul due
vengeance.

Almeyda. Talk'st thou of honour, with the loss of
virtue ?
If these are the conditions of thy mercy,
Bring forth the rack, and glut thy savage soul.

Almorán. Virtue! an empty phantom, mere im-
posture,
Contriv'd by knaves, to cheat believing fools
Of all those joys they would themselves ingross ;
Such joys ! such extasies ! as thou canst give.

Hamet. What do I hear ?—sure all heav'n's wrath
is wasted,
Or this blasphemer is their chosen instrument
To wreak their vengeance on a guilty land ?
Forbear, angelic maid, to sue for me :
Depriv'd of thee, death can no terrors bring .
Nor can I know a paradise without thee.
Give then, O ! give me, but one parting glance ;
That I may bear with me the dear impression,
Until we meet again in those blest dwellings,
Of ceaseless love, and ever-blooming beauty ;
Our destin'd lot ere many moments pass.

(*To Almorán.*) Insulting tyrant ! most presumptuous
monster !

Who seek'st to violate those sacred flames,
Whose smallest spark, ne'er to that breast found
passage :

And to effect thy lawless, brutal purposes,
Dar'st ev'n prophane the awful name of virtue ;
If there be justice in the realms above,
Thou stand'st upon the brink of sure perdition.

Almorán.

Almorán. Slaves, bear them hence ; why am I not obey'd ?

Her to my chamber ; him to instant death.
Then, I all pow'rs defy. *Osmin* ere this,
Hath met the fate his perfidy demanded.

(*As the Mutes are moving towards Hamet and Almeyda, Osmin rushes from behind the arras, and stabs Almorán.*)

Osmin. No, tyrant !—*Osmin* lives—to greet thee thus.

Almorán. His poniard's in my heart.—Then this to thine.

(*Stabs Osmin and falls.*)

Eternal curses on th' ill fated stars,
That rul'd my natal hour, and mock me thus !
(*Dies.*)

Osmin. Quick seize on *Caled* !—He the signet bears

For purposes of blood : I doom'd the first.
(*To Almeyda.*) Divine, much injur'd maid ! dry up those tears.

When I'm no more (as I shall quickly be,)
This writing will inform you, that your *Hamet*
Is innocent, (as I, alas ! am guilty,)
Of all the wrongs you have unjustly suffer'd.
Oh ! what are now my flattering dreams of greatness !
Take—take them all, but for one added moment.—
And must I meet the awful eye of justice !
Hide me, ye mountains ! swallow me, ye seas !
I go—I go—down,—down——oh, mercy ! mercy !
(*Dies.*)

Enter lords MIRVAN and ZAMA, with several Persian Officers.

Mirvan. Hail, mighty prince ! already hath this period

Spread

Spread through your troops, now posted round
your palace,

And they, the court, with numbers of your people,
In joyful throngs pour in to pay their homage.

Hamet. Throughout our realms proclaim a general pardon.

Already death hath rioted too much.——

“ This truth henceforth let erring mortals know,

“ True peace from conscious worth alone can flow ;

“ Though wild ambition, leagu’d with lawless
“ lust,

“ And rage infernal, should assail the just,

“ Heav’n still makes virtue its peculiar care,

“ Nor shall they fail, who bravely persevere.”

F I N I S.



